

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LIBREV 00904 151350Z
ACTION L-01

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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
TO SECSTATE PRIORITY 881

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 904

STADIS/////////
LIMDIS
E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PCOV, PINT, GB
SUBJECT: PENDING SEC COMPLAINT: GABONESE REACTION

REF: STATE 93727

1. SUMMARY PRESIDENT BONGO IS UNHAPPY ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF UNFAVORABLE PUBLICITY FROM SEC PAGE AIRWAYS COMPLAINT, DENIES ANY WRONGDOING OR KNOWLEDGE THEREOF, AND REQUESTS THAT WE ATTEMPT PREVENT DISCLOSURE. END SUMMARY

2. FOLLOWING RECEIPT REFTEL, CHARGE GOT IN TOUCH MORNING APRIL 13 WITH ECONOMY AND FINANCE MINISTER OKINDA'S DIRECTOR OF CABINET ANDRE MVULA TO WHOM SEC LETTER DATED NOVEMBER 28, 1977 CONCERNING PAGE AIRWAYS INVESTIGATION HAD BEEN HANDED AND DISCUSSED LAST DECEMBER. MVULA STATED HE HAD GIVEN LETTER TO MINISTER OF STATE OKINDA WHO HAD INSTRUCTED THAT AVAILABLE DATA BE GATHERED AND REPLY DRAFTED. INFORMATION GATHERING ACCORDING TO MVULA, NOW TAKING PLACE "AT TECHNICAL LEVEL." CHARGE INFORMED MVULA THAT RESULTS SEC INVESTIGATION WOULD PROBABLY BECOME PUBLIC WITHIN FEW DAYS, BUT NOT THAT PRESIDENT BONGO WOULD BE NAMED. MVULA ALREADY AWARE FROM DECEMBER DISCUSSION POSSIBILITY HIGH LEVEL GOG OFFICIALS COULD BE IDENTIFIED AS RECEIVING PAYMENTS.

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3. AFTER TRYING FOR TWO DAYS GET IN TOUCH WITH GOG OFFICIAL WITH DIRECT ACCESS TO BONGO, WE SUCCEEDED SATURDAY MORNING IN BRIEFING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR PRESIDENT'S PRIVATE CABINET, ALBERT YANGARI. IN ADDITION TO HIS PRESIDENCY JOB, YANGARI ALSO HOLD IMPORTANT POSITION IN GABONESE CONTROLLED PRESS AND IS FREQUENTLY USED BY BONGO AS VEHICLE FOR PUBLICIZING PRESIDENTIAL POSITIONS OR POLICIES.

4. YANGARI TELEPHONED BACK ABOUT ONE HOUR TO REPORT RESULTS HIS MEETING WITH BONGO. NEEDLESS TO SAY BONGO IS UNHAPPY ABOUT THE THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE; PARTICULARLY AT THIS TIME. HE IS DEPARTING LIBREVILLE APRIL 19 FOR APPROXIMATELY ONE WEEK VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA AND POSSIBLY OTHER MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES WITH STOPS IN PARIS BOTH GOING AND RETURNING. ACCORDING YANGARI, BONGO PARTICULARLY CONCERNED THAT IF DISCLOSURE OCCURS PRIOR TO OR DURING HIS VISIT, IT WILL STIMULATE EMBASSY PUBLICITY ESPECIALLY IN FRENCH PRESS DURING HIS PARIS STOPOVERS. BONGO, MOREOVER DENIES HAVING RECEIVED ANY PAYMENT FROM PAGE. THROUGH YANGARI, HE ASKED IF WE CAN PREVENT DISCLOSURE OR, IF THAT NOT POSSIBLE AT LEAST DELAY IT UNTIL END OF MONTH AFTER HE COMPLETES TRIP. BASED ON PARA 2 REFTEL WE HELD OUT LITTLE HOPE, BUT AGREED TO TRANSMIT HIS REQUEST.

5. ACCORDING TO YANGARI, MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE IS NOW BEING PRESSED TO COMPLETE ITS INVESTIGATION 1972 CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS PURCHASE GULFSTREAM II THROUGH PAGE. WE SUSPECT THAT IF DISCLOSURE OF PAGE PAYMENT TO BONGO BECOMES PUBLIC, GOG INVESTIGATION WILL "REVEAL" THAT RECIPIENT WAS ACTUALLY FORMER MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE PAUL MOUKAMBI. THE LATTER IS FAIRLY RELIABLY REPORTED TO HAVE DIVERTED MILLIONS TO PERSONAL ACCOUNTS IN EUROPE (WHERE HE NOW LIVES) DURING HIS TENURE AS MINISTER.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: IF IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO PREVENT OR EVEN
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DELAY DISCLOSURE PER PRESIDENT BONGO'S APPEAL, WE WOULD AT MINIMUM LIKE TO BE IN POSITION TO KEEP GOG APPRAISED IN ADVANCE OF DEVELOPMENTS. PARTICULARLY WE REQUEST AS MUCH ADVANCE INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE OF SEC FILING DATA AND TELEGRAPHIC SUMMARY PORTION COMPLAINT DEALING WITH GABON. YATES

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